

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING

This draft of agricultural training is based on Italian climate and vegetable farming both in open fields and cold tunnels.

The training will be strictly experiential, i.e. working among vegetables, with short theoretical introductions. Users will be directly involved in the training activities. In such a way the agricultural training will have an educational training outcome too, as social professionals, while learning and experimenting themselves, will be able to compare their own abilities and difficulties with those of the users. So they will understand better which skills are needed to perform the task, what tasks are more suitable for the individual user, how to help them, etc.

The red thread of the training will be the *observation of what happens in the cultivated fields according to seasons*, explaining what's happening, why it happens and what should be done. The observation will be guided by the trainer's questions, i.e. not explaining beforehand what and why it happens but asking questions such as:

- 1) "Why after the rain there is a surface crust on the soil? Is it a good or a bad thing? What should we do?";
 - a) More and more weeds are sprouting among lettuce plants: what are they and what should we do?";
 - b) There are insects on eggplants (aubergines): are they undesired guests (parasites) or are they welcome (useful insects)?.

Main training themes

Type of soil: its qualities and needs;

Preparation of the soil: machines and tools

Sowing, transplanting,

Vegetable families: characteristics, needs, diseases, enemies

Rotation

Green manuring

Correct use of manual tools

Watering: needs and techniques

control of parasites and weeds

Harvesting: maturation of vegetables, ways of collecting them (tools)

Preservation and Preparation of vegetables for selling

Timing five meetings of two days each from May to October.

- 1) Beginning of May: spring/summer cultivations, the soil, how to test and improve the fertility, sowing and transplanting.
- 2) Middle June: the control of weeds and parasites, useful organisms, first harvests, preparation of products for selling (cleaning, cutting, putting in boxes..)
- 3) Beginning of August: summer/autumn cultivations, sowing, transplanting, watering
- 4) Mid-September: again summer/autumn cultivations, weeds, parasites, useful organisms, harvest, preparation of products for selling
- 5) End of October: calendar of sowing and transplanting, planning of sowing and transplanting, alternation of cultivations, quality and sensorial analysis of products.